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THE HOUR  
AND THE  
CHURCH

By A. MAUDE ROYDEN



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THE CHURCH



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# THE HOUR AND THE CHURCH

AN APPEAL TO THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

*By* A. MAUDE ROYDEN

“Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the  
mother of us all.”

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## CHAPTER I

### THE CHURCH OF THE NATION

**H**AS the Church of England a future? To many it seems not. Organized religion, they say, has no future: least of all an organization so tied and bound to the State as the Church of England. If Christianity survives the war at all, it will not be in the Churches but outside them.

Few will deny that this *may* be the truth. But some of us believe that mankind is still "incurably religious," and nothing can convince us—certainly not the war—that religion can exist without fellowship. If we scrap the fellowships we have—and we may have to—we shall without a doubt create new ones. And in the process, how much we shall lose! We fix our eyes on the glaring failures, the insincerities, the materialism, the snobbishness, the pitiful ineffectiveness of our Churches. But we must remember also, if we put them aside as useless, their great tradition, the truth they have witnessed to, the communion

they represent. Is it necessary to lose it all, because it is so mixed with evil?

The answer lies, not with their critics, but with the Churches themselves. Let them show cause why men should care for them. Let them convince a world growing more sceptical every day that it still needs them. They—not their critics—are now on their defence.

It is for this cause that I appeal to the Church of England. I am only one of many thousands, hundreds of thousands, who are neither theologians nor priests—ordinary people living in the world—"incurably religious"—instinctively turning to that religious body into which I was baptized, for fellowship in the tremendous adventure of applied Christianity. It is because I am no single or extraordinary phenomenon that I make this appeal. It is because there are so many like me. The only difference between me and most of the others is that they no longer hope anything from the Churches, and least of all from the Church of England. But some of us still hope. She has so much, this beloved Church of ours: we owe her so much. And she is still the Church of our country. Is it not possible even now that she may be our inspiration and our guide,

as well as our consoler and the home of our devotion ?

"The day of national religions is over." But is that true? Is it not the very reverse of the truth? War has reminded us of the tremendous force that patriotism may be. Can such a force be left unconsecrated? Our Lord was a Jew, and there is in His attitude towards His own people a great expectancy, a high hope, which none who read the Gospels can pass by. And of all the griefs which overbore Him at the end, it is the failure of His people to be what God meant them to be which wrung from Him that cry of grief which is perhaps the most heartrending in literature.<sup>1</sup>

"To be what God meant us to be": to do what He meant us to do. To make this possible is the ideal of a national Church. Each race, each country—as each individual—has its gift to make to civilization. That gift should also be a gift to the religious experience and the religious idealism of the world. To make it such, to consecrate

<sup>1</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. xxiii. 37). (R.V.)

the genius of a nation to the service of God and man, a national Church is needed. Such a Church should be the noblest expression of national life. And such a Church, if it existed, would be *national* whether it was *established* or no.

But can we hope that the Church of England is, or ever can be, that Church of England's soul? Is it in any sense other than by a legal fiction the Church of England at all? One-fifth part of the population of London were found to attend a place of worship on Sunday when the last census of such figures was taken. Of this small proportion how many were Anglicans? How many of these were "members" of the Anglican Church in any vital sense? We have no answer; but the fact that the answer must be but a proportion of a proportion of one-fifth, makes our claim to express the religious genius of our race—a claim inherent in the title "Church of England"—at least open to criticism.

And yet the Church of England is in some sense national, and that a true if a terribly inadequate one. It is the creation of our countrymen; it is pre-eminently Anglo-Saxon. We made it, after all—after our own image. It speaks the language of England at her greatest, and as the greatest of



her sons—Shakespeare—spoke it. It covers the land with its network of parishes, and every citizen has a claim upon the services of its priests. Even those who have gone out from her still call themselves her children and claim some right within her borders.

*Ecclesia Anglicana* was not always the Church of a sect or of a class, or part of a class, but of the nation. Is it then altogether vain to believe that she may be once more the Church of England? that there is still in her something to which the nation will respond? The men and women who turn to Christ to-day are not content to be Christians by themselves; they seek a fellowship, they desire a spiritual home.

And I think that it is to the Church of England that such men and women turn, at least at first. Here is the Church of their country, perhaps of their baptism. Here is a Church whose history is knit up with the history of their race well-nigh from its beginning. If she is a national Church, then in her they have a right to a place. Can she welcome us all? Can she be our spiritual home?

If she cannot, it is her fault, I think. It is not true—it is even grotesquely untrue—that people to-day are not interested in religion. Nor is this only a momentary

interest, evoked by—to end with—the war. Interest in religion was growing every day, before the war broke out—though it has been deepened in some by the problems war presents, and by its pain. On this point those of the clergy who constantly assert and regret our supposed lack of interest are really at a disadvantage as witnesses. Men do not talk to them about religion because they do not wish their interest in “first and last things” to be mistaken for an interest in churches: but they talk to one another. I do not know of any subject—not even war, not even politics—on which they will talk so excitedly or so long. A man or woman who is honestly “not interested in religion” strikes one to-day as an isolated and slightly inhuman person. It is not his fault, but he stands a little apart from the main stream of human affairs. Perhaps the war may end by brutalizing us all. We may learn to say, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” But at present we are interested in religion, and the future lies in our hands.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT HINDERS THE REUNION OF THE CHURCHES?

WE Christian people were once a single Church. We want to be so again. We have worked together and prayed together, and together we are faced with the problem of a world gone wrong. It seems to us senseless to go on insisting that we are all opposed to one another—some “right,” some altogether “wrong”—when we all want the same thing and worship the same God.

Before the breaking out of war we were feeling this need for reunion. After all, the war is only a result of all our quarrels and our other kinds of war. No one who cared about his fellow-men could really call the pre-war period *peace*. There was industrial and civil strife. There was an armed truce between the nations. That is not peace. We were at war all the time, and so we had already begun to long for peace, at least with our fellow-Christians. And now the war has come and made us wish more passionately for peace, and realize

more than we did before what a fight Christianity has before it, if it is to conquer the world for God. The greatness of the battle presses us closer together. "It is simply inconceivable to a plain soldier like myself," said an officer to his men far away on the Macedonian front,<sup>1</sup> "that men who have stood shoulder to shoulder now for three years facing the most awful hardships which war is bound to bring, sharing these in common, and not only that, but sharing too in these supreme moments of our life a common religious service—those Holy Communion services in tent or dugout, in France, Egypt, Mesopotamia—all over the world—are we really going back to an eternal petty warfare of inter-denominational strife? It seems too ridiculous to be even thought of, and yet it is bound to happen unless we find an alternative."

Too ridiculous to happen . . . and yet it is bound to happen.

It must not happen. We too, at home, have got our battle. To us also it begins to seem ridiculous that we should attach such supreme importance to our inter-denominational differences when we have got to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Our differences have their importance. If

<sup>1</sup> See the *Morning Post*, July 31, 1917.



some people are afraid of reunion it must surely be because they think that importance is not realized. Let such people be reassured. It is not *uniformity* for which we are longing—a dry and arid regulated sameness, rigidly imposed upon us all. There will always be differences of temperament and character. One man can best worship God in silence, another in free and spontaneous speech, another in the great forms of beautiful language and ritual. And these differences go deeper than mere temperament and forms of ritual. They reach our minds and hearts, and form our way of apprehending God. Well, what then? Is this enough finally to divide us? I think not: unless we are prepared to say, “In our doctrine, our worship, our way of drawing near to God, the whole truth is to be found. We are right: the others are wrong. If they want reunion, let them admit this and join us.” We twentieth-century Christians are not prepared to say this. We think we have some part of the truth; we think those who belong to other Churches than ourselves have some part of the truth also. We believe that we hold a great deal in common, and what we do not yet hold in common, we should like to share. Each Church has a different

history, a different spiritual experience, a different spiritual gift. Nothing can rob us of the wealth that experience has won, nothing lessen in our eyes the value of the truth we know. But we would share it now with our brothers, so far as it lies in them to receive it; and receive from them, so far as lies in us, what they—we are sure—have to give.

What hinders? Fundamental differences? What differences *can* be fundamental between those who love and follow Christ? How artificial these barriers between us seem in the light of our tremendous war! We take note, we who care about such things, of the teaching of men of spiritual power on subjects of fundamental importance. Does it matter to us or to any one to what communion they belong when they speak to us of first and last things? A year or two ago we were all reading *The Meaning of Prayer*: another year, *The Jesus of History*. These books were commended to Anglicans by bishops. The one of them was published with a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury. By whom were they written? By two Baptist ministers.

Here are the things that matter; the meaning of prayer (we find it so difficult to pray!)—the character of Jesus. Are there

any subjects *more* important to the followers of Jesus? And if our Archbishops send us to a Baptist minister to learn about them, do they expect us afterwards to get into a fever because we are not all perfectly at one as to the age at which we ought to be baptized, or unchurch one another because we do not agree about the importance of bishops or the meaning of apostolical succession? These things are important? Certainly they are important. We admit that. But we refuse to give them the first place, or say we "do not know" whence John Wesley had his commission to preach because he had it not from an Anglican bishop.<sup>1</sup> We know whence he had it—he had it from God.

Let us get on a little faster: we have already started on the road. We no longer contend that Mr. Glover and Mr. Fosdyck will be damned for their mistaken views on baptism or bishops. We have even got so far along the road to Christian unity that we do not really *want* them to be damned. Many of us would positively dislike the idea. Not a few Anglicans are convinced that they will themselves be very generously dealt with if they get into the same heaven as these two—at a considerable

<sup>1</sup> See *The Challenge*, March 1917.

distance. We admit—nearly all of us—that these men are Christians, as good or better than ourselves. With shame we Anglicans find ourselves confessing that all the sacramental teaching and practice of our Church in all its beauty has not been able to make of some of us Christians so good as these and many another. Who will contend to-day that the average Anglican is morally superior to the average Wesleyan? or the faithful and frequent communicant to one who shares the fellowship of a Congregational Church? or the man who was baptized in infancy to him that waited till he was of an age to experience conversion?

Let us make an act of devotion to the God of things as they are, and thereupon say boldly that these things have a certain importance, but not a fundamental one. It is right that we should take pains to think them out. It is right that we should give our allegiance where we deem ourselves nearest the truth. Of vague and sentimental thinking we have had enough and too much. But to assert that such matters are sufficiently important, and the truth about them sufficiently clear, to justify us in unchurching and casting out all those who come to a different conclusion about



them from ourselves, is to fall into that sin which our Master never wearied of warning us against—the sin of setting small matters above great and rules above principles.

The conviction that our differences are not fundamental strengthens every day among us, and strengthens the more for reading the words of those who still give great weight to them. "Catholic theology," says a certain type of Anglican, "is a complete and perfect whole." It is true: it is entire; it coheres. Once go outside it, and you get an unworkable theology, schisms, heresies, sectarianism, and the rest. "This," says he, "is my conviction. But when I emerge from the study in which I arrived at it, I behold—shall I say?—Dr. Selbie. I cannot explain him. I cannot explain him away."

The discovery of Dr. Selbie does not, however, destroy the conviction of this type of Anglican that "Catholic theology" is complete and perfect. The fact that Dr. Selbie is recognized as an inconvenient fact is in itself acclaimed as an instance of remarkable honesty in the theologian. Honesty! It may be so perhaps—of a kind. It is at least an advance in honesty on the older assumption that Dr.

Selbie or any other Free Churchman is really, in spite of appearances, a bad man, fit only to be broken on the wheel or burnt at the stake. But there are degrees of honesty, as of cleanliness. One's hands may be "clean," yet not "surgically clean." One's attitude of mind, it seems, may be theologically but not scientifically honest. "How many a beautiful theory have I seen," said Lord Kelvin, "wrecked upon the rock of a single impertinent fact." Such is the scientist's honesty. His theory may be the result of a lifetime's observation and labour. It fails to account for "a single impertinent fact"? So much the worse for the theory!

But Catholic theology, majestic, complete, is unable to account for the fact of sanctity outside the Church. So much the worse for the fact!

Yet such sanctity exists, such holy and humble men of heart. We Anglicans are not content to cut ourselves off from them. God is with them as with us—*as* with us. Not by some mere whim of His benevolence, not by "God's uncovenanted mercies," are these our brothers what they are: but by that unbounded love and grace by which we know that those who ask shall be answered, those who knock shall have the door opened to them, those who seek, find.

Not only to sacramentalists was this great promise given.

Shall not we, who are sacramentalists, and find in the sacraments of our Church a grace and strength on which we continually feed, admit at last *all* the facts, and admit their consequences? Certainly, if we fix the standard of theological honesty as high as that of scientific honesty, we shall admit that no theory, however great and whole, which leaves out of account one "impertinent fact" can be regarded as final. We have gone too far (God be thanked!) along the path of Christian charity to stop where we are now. We have opened our eyes to the existence of holy men and women in other Churches than our own, unnourished by our sacraments, unguided and unblest by our priests. They are not of the Church of England; yet, too clearly for denial, they are of Christ. They cannot be consigned to hell. It is certain that we shall be glad if we find ourselves near them in heaven. What follows? That the sacramentalist is wrong, and must forsake the sacraments which have been to him meat and drink and life, for ever? Certainly not; but that the way of approach to God that has been so infinitely much to him is not the *only* way, since these his brothers

have come by another way. The Wesleyan, the Congregationalist, the Baptist, the Friend, have all found God, and have not found Him by His "uncovenanted mercies," except as all God's mercy and all His love are "uncovenanted."

I sometimes think that of all the intolerable things that Anglicans have ever said of Nonconformists, this talk of "uncovenanted mercies" is the worst. As though God were gracious to Anglicans because He was under contract to be so, and to Free Churchmen only because and when He felt inclined! As if His gift of grace to all of us were not the unchanging and unfailing expression of His nature! As if all they who truly seek Him shall not surely find Him because He is Love and cannot be other than Love!

I protest that the greatness and the glory of Catholic tradition have been caricatured into a lie by theologians. There is a great truth in the belief that "without the Church there is no salvation." Who can be saved alone? Who can be a Christian alone? In what deadly spiritual peril stands that man who holds that religion is the affair only of his own soul and God! How mean and poor are the ideals of him who is a law to himself, to whom humanity is nothing, and the experience of all the

saints a trifle ! How cheap and pert the heretic who forgets his common heritage and ignores his communion with his kind !  
*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus.*

But when this great far-reaching truth is reduced to a rule and imprisoned in an organization, how quickly it becomes a lie. Outside the Church no safety ? And what Church ? Roman ? Anglican ? Orthodox ? Outside one or all of these organizations none can be saved ? It is not true. It is silly. We cannot go on pretending that it is true any longer. But if we cannot, let us let alone our niggling little explanations of the great sweep of God's freedom and love—explanations which only obscure the great Catholic truth about the Church, that all men are brothers and God is our Father, and no man can be saved or damned alone.



## CHAPTER III

### ORTHODOXY

THE Church of England is the Church of my baptism. I am her child by temperament and by conviction as well. I felt spiritually homeless until I learnt for what she stood and what she signified: but even before that, I loved her services, her saints, her character, her sacraments. It amazes me to hear my fellow-Churchmen speak of the matchless beauty of her tongue as though it were a small thing to substitute for the English language at its noblest the cheaper, clumsier, weaker phrases of to-day. In my heart I find it difficult to understand how any one can want seriously to alter her Liturgy, or withstand the charm of her order and beauty even at its sleepest.

Yet to many of the best of my fellow-Churchmen and women I appear merely a turbulent fellow, capable only of heresy and schism, because in my desire to see the end of schism I have gone further in co-operation with Christian people of other denominations than sitting round a table with them, or trying to draw up some formula to which we

might all subscribe, on the implied understanding that we should all understand it in totally different ways. I do not underestimate the value of such meetings and such formulæ. To sit together at a table and seek agreement implies the first great essential of reunion—a desire for it. To succeed in finding a frame of words which fits all our beliefs is to show that they are not so different as we supposed. But this does not in itself make them less. Is it not time now to act as well as to confer?

I do not urge action without thought. A hasty impulse, acted on at once, is more likely to lead to misunderstanding, resentment and coldness than to the end desired. The action of a great body of people, and on a question of such moment as religious unity, ought to be preceded by much thought and earnest prayer. It cannot otherwise be good. But as certainly as thought must come first, so certainly must action follow, or insincerity cannot be escaped.

We have deplored our unhappy divisions in no measured terms. We have thought and talked of reunion. We have studied each other's theological works and commended them one to another's consideration. We have expressed the warmest admiration

for each other's characters. We have admitted each other's Christianity. This cannot go on for ever. Or rather it can, but it ought not. To talk of ideals too much or too long is to run the risk—or incur the certainty?—of fatty degeneration of the soul.

Think first indeed, and think long. But the time will come when thought should pass into action. I appeal to the Church of England. It is my Church. It is also the nation's. It is numerically the largest Christian body in this country. If there are others, large or small, with whom she has no communion, she must examine her own conscience, since she was first in the field, and no Anglican will claim that schism has been the fault of Free Churchmen alone. To drive out is at least as serious a step as to be driven, and where schism has occurred, neither those who go nor those who stay can feel entirely at ease. Most Anglicans now admit some Anglican responsibility for the secession of the Wesleys. Many are willing to admit a less or equal responsibility for each outgoing from the national Church.

If, then, we are at all responsible for the schisms we deplore; if we are, or hope to be, in any real sense, still a national Church;

is it not for us to take the first steps towards reconciliation ?

I urge this because I am a member of the Church of England, and therefore it is towards her that I, like all her children, am responsible. It seems to me that the first move lies with her—if she will make it ; and I desire to see her make it. I love her. It has been truly said that it is only in a spirit of love that reunion is possible, or even desirable.<sup>1</sup> And that love should not be the petulant admiration which the rebel sometimes appears to feel for every communion but his own : it should be loyal, understanding, based on real experience of the spiritual gifts of the Church to which one belongs. The Church of England easily arouses this love in her children, and it would be all the better if we had as much knowledge as love, and were more genuinely aware of all we have to give. For reunion

<sup>1</sup> " It is certainly expedient that we be reunited ; but we must desire reunion, not merely because it is expedient, or because it is sound policy, but because we love one another, and can no longer tolerate the inherited prejudices and disputes which separate us. Love is the only proper motive for reunion, as it is the only proper spirit in which to approach this subject. Love alone is strong enough to sweep aside all prejudices, and to dissociate the

does not mean the sinking of all differences in a common and colourless creed ; it means a sense so vivid of the gifts we have that we long to share them. It means also a sense of the reality of the gifts we have not, and a hope to share them also. We cannot share except with those we love. It is the better knowledge—the increasing love—of Anglicans and Free Churchmen which makes of reunion no longer a hopeless ideal, but a possibility, a fact. We Christians have been working side by side in so many causes that we have learnt to know each other better. On secular platforms, in social work, even in religious work, some of us have met. There are many “interdenominational” groups, and a great interdenominational movement among the young. The Free Church Fellowship asks two delegates from the Anglican Fellowships to attend its Conference. The Anglican Conference invites two of the Free. Another year, their Conferences fall at the same time. It occurs to them that it would be a good plan to unite, and the united Conference proves so happy and so profitable an experience

false from the true, amidst the welter of conflicting principles with which this question is surrounded.”  
—*The Christian Commonwealth*, September 9, 1917.



that it is repeated year by year. The Student Union unites at Swanwick not only the young of all denominations, but their teachers. The Archbishop of Canterbury was there last summer, listening to the addresses of the leaders of other Churches, and they in turn to him.

Were we, then, as our thoughts turned to the great truths of our religion and its hope for a distracted world, conscious of deep cleavages of thought, of a fundamental difference in the solutions we sought and found, as between one denomination and another? Or were we not rather unconscious of those differences altogether? Looking back upon that week of conference, I cannot remember that one of the many students with whom I talked—and who propounded to me the riddles of the universe without mitigation or remorse—asked me one question which made me remember that I was an Anglican, or caused me to wonder to what communion the questioner belonged. We talked of many things, but not of that. We wrestled with tremendous problems—for the times are tremendous—but we faced them as Christians. We were not conscious of the need of any other bond of union than that all-sufficient one. And what is true of the Student

Union is true also to a great extent of such bodies as the Anglican and Free Church Fellowships and the Free Catholic Movement.

These bodies are not the least vital in the religious world at present. Some of them at least are the most so. It is difficult to put into words the joyful sense of fellowship found in them. No one who belongs to such a group or movement will believe that in thus meeting and working with Christians of all denominations they are on the wrong lines. The experience they have been through together defies argument, or rather it is itself an argument which cannot be confuted. We *know* the things we have in common are greater than the things we have apart. The things we have apart are no less true and dear than before: only they do not hold the first place any more. We give this to devotion to our Lord. Who is a Christian is our brother—because He is our Father and our Lord.

This bond of union, I have been told, is sentimental (or, better, devotional) rather than intellectual, and those who lean on it too much are in danger of loose thinking. To be "orthodox" is, after all, to think rightly, and orthodoxy cannot be unimportant to those who pray for "a right judgment

in all things." Such must, however reluctantly, when they are convinced they have the truth, be conscious of separation from those who have failed to find it. So I am assured.

But the argument suggests a very misleading conception of "orthodoxy." Orthodoxy is right thinking: it is not complete and final knowledge. Knowledge of God is the supreme concern of orthodoxy, and the Gospel of Christ and of His Church is the revelation of God to us. But while it is of supreme importance to know God, and our search for truth is a continual search for Him, no one can know Him finally and wholly. This at least is certain. We are human, and our brains are not of a kind to apprehend completely the divine, nor so long as we are human shall we ever do so. It is not a want of orthodoxy that makes our thought fall short of God's divinity. It is the nature of our thought, which, finite, cannot grasp the infinite. If we cannot measure love with our yard-measure, it is not because the measure is not long enough. It is because love is not measured so. If we fail to apprehend God, it is not because we are unorthodox, but because we are human and can only understand the Godhead so far as it is revealed to us in terms of humanity.

We can therefore think rightly as long as we know that we are not thinking completely. We can trust our knowledge of God, and live by it, as long as we realize that it is incomplete. An understanding may be true as far as it goes, and valid as long as one remembers that there is a "further." It becomes untrue—it becomes a lie—the moment we believe it to be complete.

A man who says he knows that God is Love says the truth—so we Christians believe. A man who says that what he knows about God is all that there is to be known tells a lie. The first man is orthodox: the second is a liar.

This is where we have made our mistake. Catholic theology is great, beautiful, profound, and true. The moment the theologian says "This is all: the whole truth is here" his truth becomes a lie.

Orthodoxy, therefore, is only possible as long as our "right thinking" includes a right consciousness that we have only a part of the truth—not other than true, but yet only a part. And it must mean, to every lover of truth, a continual pressing on to more. The theologian, like the scientist, can never rest content. He must continually press on. He must always obey

the guidance of the Holy Spirit leading Him on into the truth. He must bear in mind our Lord's promise—"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." He must for ever listen to those "many things," and strive to be more and more able to bear them. The hunger and thirst of the man of science after knowledge must be surpassed by that of the Christian thirsting after the living God. He must never say "It is enough." He must never abandon the quest. He must never tire of purifying his soul of self-interest, his mind of confusion, his life of error, that he may be of those pure in heart who see God. The humility of the man of science must be pride compared with the humility of the man of religion; the courage of the explorer in the face of physical danger be exceeded by the courage of the theologian in danger whether of body or of soul.

Such an adventurer will never say, "Let us not search here, for we may lose our faith," or "Shut now your eyes and ears lest you see a devil." Neither the advances of science nor the researches of Biblical criticism will alarm him. He knows that it is the truth that makes us all free. He knows truth is another name for God, and he will go down into hell to find it.



But then it is clear that orthodoxy is dynamic and not static. It is a tremendous adventure, a continual effort of the mind. Those who realize this, and know that the mind as well as the heart belongs to God and must for ever seek Him, stand amazed at the discovery that people calling themselves orthodox think or act as though they thought that orthodoxy consists in the repetition of a number of statements called a "creed." How easy a means of attaining so amazing a result! Alas! orthodoxy is not so easily won. Not when Christ called him from his fishing-nets, but after long and closest intimacy, did His master ask St. Peter, "What think ye of Christ?" The answer was received with too much joy for any one who loves Christ ever to dare to think that it was unimportant, that it does not matter what we think of Christ. It matters tremendously. Perhaps nothing else matters at all. But to think rightly about Christ—about God—was the result of long companying with Jesus. To the last how "unorthodox" were some of those who had been with Him in such close companionship! "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" was Christ's sorrowful question to one who should have come nearer the

truth *because* he had been "so long time" with Jesus. It matters profoundly that we be orthodox—that we "think rightly" of God. But such right thinking is not a test imposed upon the sinner: it is the supreme achievement of the saint.

## CHAPTER IV

### MUST THE CHURCH ALWAYS BE LAST ?

IT is a comfortable doctrine with all who love things as they are, that "organized religion is always conservative." A hundred times it has been said to me, "Do not expect progress from the Church of England. She is old, she is rich, she is stiff. She is a great corporation with vested interests. She cannot move quickly; but be patient with her: she will move at last—when all the world has moved." Both her lovers and her foes seem to be at one in this conviction, and her leaders (?) seriously affirm their duty not to go faster than is perfectly safe.

I have been interested for years in the Woman's Movement—and have been taught from my youth up that the Church has done great things for woman, and Christianity been her great uplifter. But with no less bland an assurance of rightness, the officers of the Church of England have also continually assured me that it is not possible

*now* for them to lead. They must wait on public opinion.

Last year (1917) a Report was issued by a Committee appointed by the two Archbishops on the relations between Church and State. This Report left the position of women as voters and voted for, in fact as members of the laity, wholly untouched. When complaints were made, the defence was that the bulk of the Report had been written before the war, and that the great change in the public estimate of women's capacities and duties had occurred since. This, it seems, was held to be a most reasonable explanation. Is the Church then, as a matter of course, to follow and not to lead public opinion? Surely, if the public estimate of women was mistaken before the war, the Church should have been striving to amend it: if it was right, she should not now abandon it.

I instance the position of women only because it is a point continually pressed home to me. Any one who has cared about any reform has the same experience. The Church does not ask if it is good or bad: she inquires into the state of public opinion. And when the dreadful moment for action comes, the Archbishop of Canterbury—hitherto dumb on the difficult question of

Women's Suffrage—announces his intention of casting his vote with the majority, because “public opinion has undergone a great change on this question,” and to oppose it would be to court “a humiliating defeat.” Even now, His Grace describes his action as “a leap in the dark.” His gesture is more like that of a man who plunges over a precipice when violently pushed from the rear.

It has not been otherwise with Labour. As long as the Labour Movement was small in numbers, weak in influence, it was not courted by the Church of England. To-day her more intelligent leaders at least are anxious to “get into touch with Labour,” and it is not absolute damnation to a priest to be known to belong even to the I.L.P. But those who took this rash step a little earlier than prudence would have dictated must sorrowfully feel that all the grace of such advances is lost, because the Church waited until Labour was (not only respectable but) menacing.

One thinks sorrowfully of this long and dreary search for security. When Mrs. Butler took her courage in her hands, and followed her Master to the saving of the lost, what help and countenance she received—God help her, it was not much!—did not come from the Church. A priest once told



me how, when he was a curate, he heard that Mrs. Butler was coming to speak in his village, and suggested that the vicar should put her up, as there was no inn in the place. "Put her up? That *notorious woman*?" was the all-sufficient reply. But to-day—her work approved, her victory won—her name is received with decorous applause and her praise is in all the churches.

Pioneers, it will be said, must expect to be persecuted. Why, yes—by the world: but by the Church of Christ? Must she be so exactly like the world? Must she trot always in the rear of public opinion, deride where it derides, and give her blessing with its applause? Must she wait until *every one* has decided? and then decide as they do, to avoid "a humiliating defeat"—a defeat which might seem as terribly decisive as the defeat of her Master on the Cross?

For what, then, does the Church exist? To tell us what we already know? To ratify what is already done? It seems an expensive and cumbersome way of doing superfluous things. Is God dead, or has His promise failed, that we, instead of confidently expecting to be led by His Holy Spirit, must be led by the public opinion of the world instead? Shall Christ bring,

no longer against a renegade race but against a renegade Church, the accusation, "Ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous"?<sup>1</sup> Is it our duty to be more anxious to be safe than eager to be right?

I urge that this conception of the Church is a mistake. It is her work to lead, inspire, inform. She is to be the leaven leavening the whole lump, the light set on a hill, the salt giving savour to all. It is not an old but a new delusion that organized Christianity must always labour in the rear of secular public opinion. Throughout the Middle Ages the Church of England again and again led or shared the fight for liberty. She was the champion of public right. She stood stoutly against the encroachments of regal power. She gave the people education—true ferment of revolution!—she established that great tradition which made it possible for Newman, hundreds of years later, to assert, "There is not a man who writes against the Church but owes it to the Church that he can write at all."

Democracy was invented by the Church. The Stoics had said "All men are equal." The Church believed and practised it herself. Any man might become a priest if

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiii. 29.

he had learning; and the Church gave learning to all. Any man might come to be Pope; and the Pope was God on earth. Truly the Christian Church turned the world upside down. Here, in our England, the Archbishop of Canterbury was the champion of the people. Anselm, Lanfranc, Thomas à Becket, Stephen Langton—these are names to point to when men say the Church is bound to be reactionary. It has become so, God knows. That it must remain so is not true. If it does remain so, it has not long to live.

It is useless to shut our eyes and repeat that the Church is a Divine institution which can neither fail nor die. The Jews held fast by the same kind of belief. "We have Abraham to our father," they repeated. "We are God's peculiar, chosen people. The Divine promise cannot fail." Neither did it fail. The Messiah came indeed, and the promise was fulfilled; but while they reminded each other of Abraham, they inadvertently crucified Christ.

And we? If we refuse to preach the revolutionary Gospel of Christ, if we lag always in the rear, if we leave to others the difficult and dangerous work of the pioneer, if we must depend on the State to preserve a little decency, a little respect

for freedom, a little toleration in our borders, may we expect a more merciful judgment than the chosen people? We have the promise ; true. We have also the warning : " God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

## CHAPTER V

### WHERE ARE THE REFORMERS ?

**T**HE eyes of all who look for reform turn to the Liberal school of thought in the Church of England. With them, without doubt, lies our hope. They at least are committed to a belief in progress. They at least have not believed that the Holy Spirit has finished His work and left us in possession of the whole of Truth enshrined in a rigid formula. From them, if from any one, the impetus to reform must come.

And certainly we have good reason to hope. The Anglican Liberal, just because he cannot convince himself that his Church alone possesses all the truth, is able to believe that other Churches have at least a share. He is, in consequence, more generous in his estimate of them, more just in his wish to co-operate with them, than can be a man who is sincerely convinced that the relation between the Established and Free Churches can be succinctly summed in the simple assertion that it is right and they



are wrong. And this attitude towards truth is not due to indifference towards it, or under-estimate of its greatness. On the contrary, the Liberal Churchman conceives too nobly of truth to imagine that it can be imprisoned in a formula or understood by learning that by heart. He is too loyal to it to care very much for anything else. The Liberal priest knows, as well as the High Churchman of an earlier generation, that he must expect no advancement except by a happy accident. He will be regarded as disloyal by his official superiors, and as dishonest by the world in general. He will be told by many that he is preaching what he does not believe. If he is not frozen out altogether, he must resign himself to continual neglect, and that not only in the matter of rewards but also of services. He will not be made a bishop, but neither will those that are bishops give him work. It is difficult to oust him from his own parish, but at least he will be very largely excluded from delivering any message in other people's parishes.

No one who has not worked in the chill of continual disfavour from those who are officially one's leaders can appreciate the extraordinary hardship that such disfavour may become. But the Liberal Churchman

has, added to it, the suspicion of a more or less indifferent public that, although he may be right in not believing the nonsense that his Church pays him to teach, he really ought not to take her pay if he has ceased to believe it.

The injustice of this hasty and ill-considered verdict, on a position which few of the critics have taken the trouble to understand, is harsh. Yet it is not, so it seems to me, wholly undeserved. The man in the street has little understanding of the Liberal priest's position: has the Liberal priest any value whatever for the man in the street? And can he be of much service in the great work of reform till he has?

It was the common people who heard our Lord gladly—not the intellectuals. It is we men and women in the street who are hungry for His truth to-day. We suffer under a bondage of literalism which destroys us; or we reject it and imagine that nothing is left. We read the text-books at least of Science, and contemplate with growing incredulity the date "4004" fixed in the margin of our Bibles as that of the creation of the world. We compare the conflicting accounts of that creation, and, growing bolder, the—at least—differing accounts of even

such central truths as the Incarnation and the Resurrection of our Lord.

More serious still, we question not the historicity only but the ethics of the Bible. What a strange God we are asked to worship ! Does He really approve of human sacrifice, or demand the slaughter of "wives and little ones" for the father's fault ? Is He as capricious, as revengeful, as jealous, as unreasonable, as the Old Testament at times suggests ? Does He attach such great importance to details and such little importance to great sins as some of its stories tell us ? No—we are sure He does not. And yet we are left in this preposterous bondage of ignorance, till we either wash our hands of the business altogether or assume the attitude of the old lady who said, on being asked if she believed that the whale swallowed Jonah that she did, and if the Bible had said so, she would have been willing to believe that Jonah swallowed the whale. Those who are prepared to do this remain in church and (presumably) listen to sermons. Those who are not, stay away either in mind or body. They do not go to church or they deliberately abstract their minds when the sermon begins. But the latter course generally leads to the former. By the time you have abstracted

your mind from the sermon, you have become conscious of so many highly controversial statements in lessons, hymns, and psalms, and it appears to you that you are expected to accept them so literally, that—if you cannot do this—there seems to be no place for sincerity left. The feeling that you are speaking in another language, and worshipping another God from your fellow-Churchmen, grows stronger. To avoid dishonesty, many decide that it is really fairer to keep away.

All this might be changed if those who are scholars would speak out. But this they will not do. Not long ago I heard a great scholar give an address on "The Value of the Old Testament" to a small gathering of Anglicans. To some of us—not ourselves scholars—it was a revelation. Such learning, such wit, such passion, such devotion inspired the address that we wished it could have lasted for hours instead of minutes. When it ended, one of the audience—need I say a clergyman?—objected that such an address delivered to an ordinary congregation would do great harm. The "ordinary" people present were not a little surprised at this criticism, but their surprise became stupefaction when the learned speaker himself indignantly pointed out that he

was not addressing "an ordinary congregation," and that he *would not dream of doing so in such terms.*

There lies our quarrel with the Liberal Churchman. Why does he leave us to his brother "spike"? Why are we to be in bondage to the letter? Why is the truth too good for us? We should be shocked, it is supposed, if it was suggested to us that our God is *not* "a jealous God." Believe me, we are far more shocked at the supposition that He is. We should feel our faith crumble if any one were to suggest that the story of Adam and Eve is not history? No! it is the pretence that it is history that has made many of us lose our faith, if not in God, certainly in His Church.

Why have you so great a scorn for the "ordinary congregation," O Liberal priests? Do you not realize that we also have some small degree of intelligence, that we have a little science and are beginning to read Biblical criticism, that we desire to worship as divine a God as you? Why have you not given us the truth that should make us free—free of the old mischievous superstitions, free of the bondage of the letter, free with the great and glorious freedom of Christ?

Your contempt for us and for our in-



telligence has not really served us or the Church. It has only served to empty the churches. It has only served to shake our belief in your honesty—that honesty which you have sacrificed so much to keep unstained.

A layman, in genuine perplexity at the apparent ignorance of the clergy (whom he judged by their sermons to the “ordinary congregations” of which he formed a part) of scientific facts now familiar to the laity, approached his vicar with some tentative question. The vicar, with indulgent smile, proceeded to give the answer, an answer quite in line with modern scientific thought. The man was staggered. “And how long,” he said after a pause—“how long have you gentlemen in black known these things *and kept them from us?*”

I do not know whether the vicar justified himself with a reference to the weaker brethren. I know that this is the answer I always get, and it has made me wonder whether St. Paul was wholly inspired when he said it. At least, it is a very dangerous assumption that the knowledge which has enlarged, confirmed, inspired your faith, will make the next man perish. Perhaps he is perishing not “through thy knowledge,” but through the want of it. Biblical criti-

cism is not his business : he has other work to do. We cannot all be or do the same. But perhaps his work, whatever it is, has brought him up against just those problems that you can solve. Perhaps life itself has taught him to seek a more universal and beneficent God than the Jahveh of the Book of Kings. Perhaps he finds it difficult to reconcile the Christianity which forbade the calling down of fire on a city which rejected Christ with the Christians who thought death a suitable punishment for Ananias and Sapphira. Not knowing that neither Jael's opinion of what God's will is, nor even that of St. Peter need be final to those who are baptized into Christ, he believes that he must either forsake his God or—the Church. Only for fear of the “weaker brother,” Liberal Christianity had saved him from this dilemma. But he is only an “ordinary” person, so he cannot be saved, and when the dilemma becomes acute, he generally (thank God!) chooses to abide by the only God he can truly worship, and comes no more to church.

Is Truth really so dangerous? Well, perhaps so. At least one finds that the weak brother, for whom so much has been sacrificed that almost all but he have gone away, is often at the mercy of the first jester

who puts to him the earth-shattering question, "Whom did Cain marry?"

It is just because I believe Christ when He tells us that the truth will make us free, that the "economy" practised by the Modernist horrifies me. The Modernist himself has found that truth. Why does he keep its spacious freedom to himself? It is possible that congregations from whom a remorseless economy of the truth has weeded out all but the very, *very* weak brethren might, probably would, be shocked. That is the penalty that must, here and there, be paid for past intellectual laziness. But again and again those few Modernists who have faith in their fellow-men—nay, who will not even "leave their sister while she prays"—have found their faith in the common people more than justified. It is not the simple who are shocked to learn that God not only does not now demand, but never did demand, human sacrifice. On the contrary, it is they who are most relieved to learn the truth. It is they who most readily understand how human beings, everywhere and always, have sought God if haply they might feel after Him and find Him: have found, and lost: have erred and been deceived by their own blindness, their own mistakes: but have never aban-

doned the search altogether nor ever wholly missed the truth : have never been abandoned, nor are now abandoned, by the God of Truth who leads them on.

This contempt for the ordinary person, which only a very few Modernists escape, is found also in their uninspiring attitude towards any forward move in the Church of England. Of all those who desire her freedom from the incubus of establishment, the Liberal Churchman might be expected to be the most enthusiastic. But no—he fervently believes that the Church is totally unfit to manage her own affairs, and without the control of a bored and indifferent House of Commons would immediately become more reactionary and bigoted than before. The position is anomalous beyond speech. The Church can neither appoint her own officers nor remove them : she cannot set her own house in order : she cannot reform, she can hardly breathe. But all this the Liberal Churchman defends, on the ground that if she were free she would be worse than ever ! Is she, then, worth preserving ? It is difficult to believe it. If the national character of the Church is a question not of its spirit but of its machinery,<sup>1</sup> it is at

<sup>1</sup> " The Church of England . . . did not become the national Church because it was established, *but*

the mercy of any political exigency that may arise, and is, in any case, of little interest. If, in these days of great risks and heroic adventures, a bench of bishops who can be terrified into surrender by "a very small minority" is the very best that we can hope for, are bishops worth while? Yet *The Modern Churchman*<sup>1</sup> first describes the episcopate thus: "The majority . . . have trembled at its (the English Church Union's) roars and screams, and hastily yielded to its threats as the only way of promoting peace and unity in the Church home"—and then affirms that "there is a very general agreement among thoughtful Churchmen to-day that the appointment of bishops by the Prime Minister, who for the time being represents the English nation, has given to the English Church *a much better episcopate than could have been obtained by any other means.*"

Is an episcopate guilty of repeated and cowardly surrender to the roars and screams of a very small minority really the best that *by any means* can be produced by the Church of England?

*if it were disestablished it would cease to be the national Church.*"—*Reform or Revolution in the National Church*, W. W. Jackson. (The italics are mine.)

<sup>1</sup> January 1917.



I do not catch at a hasty expression of impetuous protest, that I may make a debating point, when I quote these words from *The Modern Churchman*. It is a matter of common knowledge that a timid conservatism is the most persistent characteristic of our episcopate. That this is inevitable is impossible to maintain of a Church whose record contains such names as those of Anselm, Thomas à Becket, Lanfranc, and Stephen Langton. I submit that the supporters of the Establishment must find some better reason for insisting on a privileged position for Anglicanism in this country than that it has produced an episcopate which the "Establishers" themselves never weary of describing as both timid and stupid. If this is what "thoughtful Churchmen" think is the best possible, what must the world think of us?

I ask any reader of this book who is interested in any movement, in any public work, in any society or association—what would his judgment be of such an association if its own members were seriously to affirm that they were not fit to choose their own officers or manage their own affairs,<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> For example, discussing the reform of Church finance: "For such a scheme as he [Dr. Headlam] proposes, direct appeal must be made to Parliament,

would prefer to have it done for them by some person or persons who were not necessarily members of the association, and who might quite likely be totally out of sympathy with its aims? Yet such is the astonishing reason offered by some of the most distinguished of Anglicans for supporting the present relations between their Church and the State.

There are other reasons, of course. I do not now discuss them. I only point out that this one is continually pressed; and I affirm that if the Church is really less wise and charitable, less broad-minded, less *Christian* than the State, it is quite impossible to justify her very expensive existence. It is not reasonable to expect a sorely-burdened nation to continue to maintain so costly a fabric, merely to organize the devotional life of that small minority of the people who have what is called "the religious temperament."

Reluctant, therefore, as most people will for the Church, even if self-governing, has neither the strength nor courage herself to carry it through." And again (Dr. Headlam himself says): "There is a growing feeling that the leaders of the Church have not the courage or the will to carry out a strong and wide scheme in many directions."—Vide *The Modern Churchman*, February 1918, p. 560. Yet these are the best of all possible bishops.

be to see the business of Church reform left in the hands of ecclesiastics and ecclesiastically minded laymen, I confess I see no alternative if those who should lead the progressive movement stand aside or actively oppose it, loudly affirming that the Church is unfit to manage her own affairs. Such an attitude is incomprehensible to the democratically minded. How can any one, they ask, care to belong to an organization so contemptible? How can they expect any one else to care to belong to it? "Get on or get out" must surely be good advice here! To adopt an attitude so supine, or worse, so obstructive, as that of the typical Liberal towards Church reform—which he will neither attempt nor let others attempt—is to give the cause of Church reform away. For some one will undertake it, and if not the progressive, the liberal, the democratic, then the reactionary, the narrow, the oligarchic. "Reform" does not necessarily mean a change for the better: it may easily mean a change for the worse. It will do so in the Church of England, if those from whom the demand for reform should come, and its constructive ideals, and its practical working, stand aside in an attitude of uninspiring caution, lest a worse thing befall them. The High

Church party has many shining virtues. It is small—astonishingly small—in numbers ; but it is brave, it is devoted, it is self-sacrificing. It knows exactly what it wants, and is never too busy (or too idle) to see that its cause has advocates everywhere and at all times. It does not sleep. It does not despair. Its priests are totally regardless of preferment and joyfully consent to remain curates all their lives if necessary. They are fearless and they believe in their cause. If they “capture” the Church of England it will be because their energy and their faith have well deserved it. Yet I am persuaded that their triumph would be the end of the Church of England. Instead of a national Church, we should have a small, highly organized, and energetic sect, whose appeal to the English people would have as much effect as it has now, after seventy years of heroic and self-sacrificing toil—that is, almost none. Will not the Liberals, to whom of right the task of reformation belongs, take heart of courage now, cease to assure us that every change except in theology must be a change for the worse, and set their hands to the great work of reform before more courageous but less enlightened leaders have made reform on the right lines finally impossible ?

## CHAPTER VI

### CHURCH-MEMBERS AND CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

SOME stirring of the waters there is. The Church Reform League exists. The Church Self-Government Association educates. The "Life and Liberty" Movement agitates for freedom. All these bodies are "reform" associations.

But on what lines? Do they really want a Church which shall be a great spiritual force—the great spiritual force—in the life of the nation? Is it a static or a dynamic Church they aim at? A movement or an institution? Is it a Church which is national because it takes up into itself all that is good in the life of the nation, its art, its science, its industry, its politics, its patriotism, and directs all and consecrates all to God; or a Church that is national because it is established and has its bishops in the House of Lords? Is it a greater Catholicity or a better-organized sectarianism that they have in mind?



One wonders. There is certainly room for question.

The "Life and Liberty" Movement, for instance, advocates that the liberated Church shall give the franchise for its councils to all baptized persons who declare themselves to be members of the Church of England *and not members of any other communion*. Is this the way to create a *national* Church? What a contrast between this nervous caution and Dr. Horton's noble phrase: "I have always regarded myself as a non-conforming member of the Church of England." Which is the sectarian here? Which the schismatic? And which has more of the great Spirit of our Lord? Be it remembered also that Dr. Horton is in the less advantageous position—the harder one for magnanimity. Yet he is willing to be with us, and we are not willing to be with him.

This attitude contrasts very strangely with the claim to be "established" because we are the national Church. The "Life and Liberty" Council includes some who desire disestablishment, but on the whole its plea is for freedom with establishment if possible; freedom at the price of disestablishment only if absolutely necessary. But is not this also a narrow and exclusive demand? No one who judges churchmanship by a standard

that has any reality in it—whether one of attendance at the services of the Church, confirmation, or communion after her ordinances, or of an active interest in Church affairs (as distinct from an interest in religion)—can pretend that the Church of England includes anything like a majority of the people of this nation. On what grounds, then, does she claim the privileged position of “establishment”? If it is on the ground that the State should have some official and recognized expression of its religious character, I submit that it is not Anglicanism but Christianity that should be “established,” and all the great Christian communions should share in the official recognition of Christianity as still the religion of the great mass of the people. How is it possible to claim for one only, among many denominations, the right to this recognition?

It is only possible <sup>1</sup> if the Church of England is really—or becomes really—a national Church in a sense in which the other Churches are not so. A mere difference in numbers will not make it so, and indeed if the wishes of the more extreme prevail, and membership is held to consist in the status of communicantship, our majority is likely to be con-

<sup>1</sup> I leave aside the question whether in any case it is desirable. Personally I think it is not.

verted into a very minute minority indeed. But in any case I contend that it is the spirit that is lacking. The national Church should include all that is good—all that is in the broadest and deepest sense Christ-like in the people.

The various societies that exist for the reform of the Church have this excellent virtue—that they realize her need of reform. Reform must precede reunion, for it is not our virtues that keep us apart, but our faults : not the truths we hold (for Truth is one), but the errors. Let every Church strive to conform itself to the mind of Christ, and, as we all strip off our errors, repent of our sins, and reform our abuses, we shall draw nearer and nearer together, until we “ know ourselves into one.” When we are all more like our Master, we shall be more like one another, in essentials.

But as, in the days when art is dead or dying, the pioneers of a new school go back, not to another school, however great, but to nature itself, whence to drink inspiration and become again creative ; so let us, when we are told that the day of organized religion is over and the Churches dead, return to the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls, Jesus Christ, for inspiration.

And first of all—did He ever found or

mean a Church? Is it true that organization is no longer needed?

If we say "Fellowship" instead of Church, we shall be clearer, I think. Churches exist for the sake of fellowship, but have so little of it, that the fact is forgotten. It is proved by our desire to found a new Church whenever we leave our old one, or come under the influence of some urgent truth which it has blurred or forgotten. That "fellowship is heaven, the lack of it hell," is demonstrated afresh by every society, association, party, or brotherhood that men found to realize their hopes. It is not only that unity is strength; it is that fellowship is a spiritual necessity. We hunger to be with those who are like-minded with ourselves. We want to meet them and take counsel with them, and because we are creatures subject to time and space, we must have some sort of organization, however slight, to bring such meetings and such communings about. Some place, some time, must be chosen, and some one must choose. Already, then, you have your "Church" and its officers. Even anarchists organize.

But if a society was necessary, how was it founded? On what principle did our Lord gather together those like-minded with Himself?

One reads through the Gospels with an increasing sense that, though the call or the reception of each disciple was exquisitely individual, yet the appeal to each was the same. It was the appeal of a great personality. Men went to Christ because they liked Him. And to "like" Him meant that they shared, at least in part, His way of life, His thought of God and man. They "would see Jesus," and though sometimes to be with Him cost more than they were ready to give, or turned out to mean more than they had realized; though sometimes at first and sometimes at last they went away sorrowful, the appeal remained the same. It was and it remained the only test. No man called by Christ was asked to make a statement on theological matters. No one was asked to define His divinity or to renounce Unitarianism. They were to "believe on Christ," to accept His teaching, to live in His spirit, to drink of His cup: not to recite a creed or undergo a rite of initiation.

Should we ask more or other than He did? To what purpose do we do so? Certainly there is no efficacy in the reciting of creeds to keep out the un-Christlike or to bring the Christlike in. No unprejudiced observer can look at our Churches and fail to see



how often the pioneer, the philanthropist, the daring seeker after truth, the willing sufferer for a cause, are outside and not within her borders; how often the great currents of national life, the great enthusiasms, the vital movements, are anywhere but in the Church. Yet are not these great positive virtues of more worth than the negative virtues associated with the uninspiring ideals of "churchmanship"? And are they not those Christ would have claimed for His own?

Again and again one sees the very men who are nearest in spirit to Christ unable to share the life of His Church because, though they live in His Spirit and give their lives for His world, they cannot be sure that they subscribe to all the clauses of the Apostles' Creed. Had any such necessity been laid upon the first disciples, would they have responded as they did? Was it not *first* the call of spirit to spirit, mind to mind, that brought them to Christ?

No formula that can be devised can keep out the dishonest or the superficial thinker: any formula may become a stumblingblock to the honest. The mere fact that he is required to subscribe, *as a preliminary*, to a number of statements of the most far-reaching and most controversial character

is enough to repel the lover of truth. Would any student of science consent to do it? Acts of faith, large assumptions, every student of every science and every disciple of every master must make. But to commit oneself categorically to a number of theological and historical statements, one by one, stating that you "steadfastly believe" every one of them, when in fact you are only entering on the life whose crown may some day be the apprehension of and belief in such statements, is a very different matter. To exact it from any one who knows what scientific truth is, is to suggest to him that the theologian's idea of truth is strangely different and vastly inferior: to exact it from the ignorant or superficial is to teach them that orthodoxy is a very easy matter, and to absolve them from the great quest of Truth which should be to us all the great adventure of life.

And if no formula can be devised that will bring in those who seek Christ, or keep out those who reject Him, no more can any formula ensure unity within the Church. As long as formulæ must be interpreted by minds, so long will formulæ be interpreted differently. We all marvel at the mental gymnastics which enable those with whom we *know* we disagree to recite our formulæ

with an enthusiasm no less than our own. The same Church holds the Modernist and the Verbal Inspirationist, the Ritualist, and the Evangelical. We are all surprised at one another, but in spite of all, most of us still feel that something (in Heaven's name, what?) is gained by insisting on the repetition of formulæ by those who desire to share in the life of Christ's Church.

Such mechanical tests should have been abandoned when St. Paul met and overthrew the "orthodoxy" of his age. The other apostles, for all their personal knowledge of the Christ, would have made of Christianity the religion of a people instead of the religion of a world. Firm in the conviction that their Master Himself had taught that no jot or tittle of the law should pass away, they were prepared to exact every jot and tittle from their Gentile converts. They were defeated or converted. But a fresh defeat, a new conversion, is needed in every age. To-day it is baptism and formulæ that are demanded, in order that a real Church may become a better organized sect, for the spirit that excludes does not die though all history shows the hopelessness of these attempts to fence in the good and out the bad.

Let our test be Christ's. Organization

may be—I believe it is—necessary ; but not organization for its own sake, with tests that do not test and barriers which are no bond of union but a means of separation only. Let us organize for a purpose, and let that purpose be our test. Thus alone is the spirit of fellowship born. When men under the stress of a great conviction undertake a great adventure, then at once are they brothers-in-arms, with all the loyalty and trust and love that noble phrase implies. Fellowship cannot be created by merely sitting down and wishing you had it. But where there is a common purpose, above all where that purpose implies danger, there it is. The soldier knows it in the army, yes, and the “conscientious objector” in his society, the one confronted by the hosts of Germany, the other by the contempt of all the world. Each has his great goal before him, and to each, every man who seeks that goal is brother.

Now, the Church has no such goal. For the most part she has abandoned the attempt to turn the world upside down, and is content to preach resignation instead. Not that the sick should be healed, but that their sickness is the will of God, is her message ; not that the humble should be exalted, but that they should enjoy their

humility. The Church is to be a leaven, as Christ foretold, but with this curious property—that it never attempts to leaven the whole lump. Its work consists not in turning the world upside down, but in organizing the devotions of its people. To this work its ministers devote an incredible amount of time and energy. The more earnest they are, the more “services” are multiplied. Celebrations in every church and at every hour; matins and evensong, litanies and intercessions, the importance of being baptized, the urgency of being confirmed, the absolutely desperate necessity of communicating—nay, even the heroism of being churched, of saying grace, of having family prayers—these themes are continually on the lips of the clergy, and loud is their condemnation of those who remain deaf to their entreaties and injunctions. Nevertheless, it is increasingly obvious that those who do all those things are often not a whit better, and quite frequently very much worse, than those who abstain. If people went to Christ because they liked Him, it is equally true that they do not come to church because they do not like us. They think us stupid and conceited, snobbish and dull. They find us interested in the most preposterous



trifles and largely indifferent to the things that matter. Above all, they find our society depressing. A priest once told me that the most gloomy spectacle he ever saw was presented by the faces of the communicants approaching the altar in his church. When, on one occasion, a boy who had just been confirmed, and who had gained the idea that to be in communion with God and his fellowmen was the most joyful thing possible, came beaming up the aisle, smiling at his acquaintances as he came, several members of the congregation complained of him, saying that his conduct showed him totally unfit to approach God's altar.

This strange attitude of mind repels the ordinary person. The churches are empty of congregations and the religious newspapers full of suggested remedies. It is hopefully supposed that a change in the hours of service, an alteration of the language, a larger number of hymns or a smaller number of sermons, will effect the change. None of them is of the slightest use—at present.<sup>1</sup> People stay away because they do not want to come. It is difficult, no

<sup>1</sup> Of course, services should be at times convenient to the more hard-working members of the congregation, but, as things are, the alteration of the hour is the least important matter.

doubt, to believe this, but it really must be believed before we get any further. I am quite sure that no large number of Anglican clergy attend—shall I say?—prize-fights. The reason is not that the prize-fights take place at inconvenient hours, or under rules which the clergy do not understand. They do not attend because they do not want to attend. If those who organize them, distressed at the persistent absence of the clergy, were to put their heads together to consider what time of day would suit the clergy best, and how far the expressive but perhaps hardly classical *argot* of the ring might be revised to meet their comprehension, or its rules altered to engage their interest, the spectacle would not be more ridiculous than that of the clergy anxiously seeking the hour of service most convenient to those who simply do not want to come to a service.

Let us realize that a Church whose chief emphasis lies on the importance of religious observances will appeal to those who have what is called “the religious temperament,” exactly as a concert appeals to those who are musical. And it will appeal to no one else. But there is no virtue—none whatever—in possessing the religious temperament. I myself have it, and know what

it is worth. I like to attend the services of my Church, her observances and her ritual appeal to me, I prefer to pray within her walls where I can find an open church. But this is merely temperament, not religion. I cannot believe that the Church gets at the root of the matter when she directs so much energy to getting people to "come to church," or organizes an impassioned appeal to them to have family prayers, or to say grace. These things should surely be the effect of a great spiritual movement: they can never be the cause of it. Yet, when a mission is to be begun, a special effort to arouse the conscience made, it almost invariably takes the form of an invitation to some form of religious exercise. Will it be believed that, during the National Mission of Repentance and Hope, organized in face of the great and tragic catastrophe of war, a leaflet was issued in which—after a moving reference to the courage and devotion of the soldiers in the trenches—the writer reaches this climax in these terms: "Let us therefore lay aside all scruples begotten of timidity, and with great boldness make a personal resolution to live as Catholic Christians in the best sense of that word, and from this day forward let us say our night and morning prayers, and say

grace before and after our meals wherever eaten."

No one who had much sense either of religion or of humour could possibly have begun by referring to the soldiers in the trenches and gone on to implore us "with great boldness" to "say grace before and after meals *wherever* eaten." It is this sort of appeal that makes one realize why religion seems a very trifling business to many deeply though unconsciously religious people. One wonders what sort of a spiritual movement our Lord would have created had He begun by urging His disciples to be more careful about the ceremonial washing of their hands before meals and attendance at the Temple services. No doubt, He would have achieved just what the National Mission did.

No one who reads the New Testament with an unbiased mind could possibly conclude from it that to have the religious temperament is to be religious, or that to organize the religious devotions of its people was to be the main business of the Church of Christ. But the moment it is proposed to go beyond this, our leaders assure us that we are now dealing with politics or economics or something else that is "secular" and therefore not the business of the Church. But if this is so, then almost

everything that is interesting is secular, and the Church has abdicated her leadership in almost everything that counts. No wonder, then, that she occupies herself with ridiculous trifles such as saying grace in a restaurant: she has deliberately ruled herself out of the things that matter. No wonder men think of religion as a little thing: the "religious" have made it little.

It is true that, when thus challenged, Churchmen are apt to reply that though indeed all life belongs to religion, the business of the Church is not to advocate reforms or to lay down a programme, but to create an atmosphere in which reforms can and must grow.

The answer to this is the "atmosphere" which has, in fact, been created. The Church of England has been called "The Conservative party at prayer." An atmosphere more inimical to reform could hardly be imagined. Indeed, the mere thought of it appears to those within the Church shocking; to those without, comic.

You can no more "create an atmosphere" than you can create fellowship by wishing you could. Both are born of a great endeavour made in common.

That this is true can be seen by looking at any "live" movement to-day. What-



ever one may think of their methods or their objects, this adjective applies to the Labour Movement and the Woman's Movement as certainly as it does *not* apply to the Church. To pass from a gathering of Labourists or Suffragists to one of, for example, "National Missioners," was like passing from warm life to chilly death. I remember, in one day, attending a National Mission Council Meeting in the afternoon and an I.L.P. "social" at Bermondsey in the evening. At the one, all was staid and middle-aged, cautious, and polite with the extreme and chilling politeness of people who are too kind and nice to want to hurt one another's exceedingly sensitive feelings, even if, in order to avoid this, it was necessary to avoid saying or doing anything to the purpose. At the other, all was alive and gay, hopeful and young. We were not afraid of hurting one another's feelings, for we were all too much set on a great purpose to be thinking of our feelings at all. Some will say our purpose was all wrong. Be it so. But it was our inspiration and our bond of union.

It has often been said that women cannot work together. In the Suffrage Movement this has been proved untrue. But no one who has not been actually inside that Move-

ment can know *how* joyfully we worked together. With our hearts set on the enfranchisement of our sex, we had no time or thought for the minor matters which create friction among those who have no great goal set before them. We learnt to appreciate those whom we did not like, to forget ourselves, to rejoice in victories won by other women in places afar off as though they were our own, to consider nothing of moment but the Cause and no one to be shut out who could help it.

But, as in the Labour Movement, it was our goal that was our bond of union. That is the hall-mark of the living movement. We asked only whether those who wished to join us desired the same end, to welcome them among us. We did not insist that they should subscribe to the writings of John Stuart Mill, or recite a number of beliefs about the enfranchisement of women which only working and living in the Movement could in fact bring home to them. We asked only that they should accept our "aims and object." Is not this the way of every association that seeks to move the world? Is not this the way that fellowship arises, self is forgotten, and the world lifted on its way? Is it not the way of Christ, Who asked, "Can ye drink of the cup that

I drink of or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" and not "Do you believe in the Virgin Birth, or in My Divinity as defined in theological statements, or in the Empty Tomb?"

To proclaim the kingdom of God upon earth, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to make the blind see and the lame walk, to rejoice the heart of the poor with joyful tidings—these are the "aims and object" of Christ's Society as laid down by Himself. To achieve them would be indeed a mighty revolution! To attempt them, a glorious adventure! Do we require any bond of union but this? Is it not enough to make us all brothers, that we believe Christ's teaching truly carried out, His principles honestly applied, would indeed create a kingdom of heaven? Other great teachers have given other solutions—solutions often easier to attempt and more seemingly practical to the ordinary man. But Christ gave us His solution, and we are going to try it. Perhaps He was wrong. Perhaps we shall fail. But let us try! We believe in it enough to try it out until we die. Let us try! Is not this to "believe on Him"? Is not this the test that He proposed? What do we want with another? The goal proposed is the true test of spirits. It is the

ideal that attracts those who are like-minded into a living fellowship and society—not a rite or a creed. And such a society has the power of life to attract and to repel. It draws to itself those who in heart and mind are of it ; but it also, and by the same power, repels those who are not. “ They went out from among us because they were not of us ”—that was true of the early Church : it is true of every living movement throughout the ages. Life attracts and repels by its own strength, and the Church which is alive will “ try all the spirits ” by the force of its own idealism and life.

A Church which seriously set itself to make of the world the kingdom of love and joy which Christ described would be its own test, as well as its own bond of union. Let all come in and help who desire to try. If the Church were an active and living force, an executive Society seeking at all points to apply the principles of Christ to every problem, there would be in her a force more than sufficient to bring to her all who “ believe on Christ ” in truth, and to drive out—if they ever came in—all whose solution or whose ideal was a different one.

Would it be safe ? No, of course it would not be safe. There is no “ safe ” test possible. Has insistence on baptism or on

the recitation of creeds been a very reliable test? Has it drawn to us those whom we desire, or repelled those who are not Christ's? But a living spirit has a force possessed by no mechanical test, and attracts and repels by its own vitality. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us," is a statement of the same truth, from a different side, as that other—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." And to this truth Christ committed His Church. As here in the flesh, His life, His personality were the force which drew men unto Him; as love for what He was and thought and did was all the requirement He made of His disciples; so the life and spirit of His Church should be her sole persuasive force upon her children. Will it in after-ages be believed that for a desire to share in this abundant life men substituted, as a test of churchmanship, belief in an Empty Tomb?

Let it be admitted again that no test is infallible—that nothing can make us "safe." Christ's method brought into that first society St. John, St. Peter, St. Mary Magdalene: it also brought Judas Iscariot. Christ took the risk. Shall not we? Is there indeed any conceivable plan by which it can be



avoided? Would Judas hesitate to recite the creeds "*ex animo*"—yea, even the more startling clauses of the Athanasian Creed? History does not lead us to suppose it: there is no comfort there. But Christ's method, though it admitted a Judas, at the same time rendered him harmless. To love so perfect, courage so sublime, Judas himself became subservient, and enthroned the Master he sought to betray.

But we are afraid of such risks, afraid of such a terrible victory. We treat the Church as one long accustomed to ill-health. "Do not open the window! Do not bang the door! You cannot take risks with an invalid. Step lightly, speak softly. At any moment the poor thing might die!" At last the very *idea* of what health and vitality would allow seems to have disappeared. None but those who have worked with the dignitaries of the Church of England can imagine the lengths to which this spirit of invalidism has gone. They seem forever to count her pulse, to watch her breath, to calculate in a whisper how long she has to live, if rude and inconsiderate persons insist on speaking in ordinary tones or expect her to endure reform.

But if she were to cast aside her fears, and trust for her life and health to the living

Spirit of God, would such faith not meet its reward? Then we should find the body of the Church so vital, so alive, that it would not need to be held together by bandages and ties. It would attract as life attracts—like coming to like, because they are one in spirit, and so desire to be one in fellowship also. All who love Christ would be with us if we really “showed Him forth.” All who worship Truth would seek us out because we were inflamed with a thirst for Truth even greater than theirs. All who love their fellow-men would desire to be in communion with us because we offered the most perfect service of all.

## CHAPTER VII

### "PRACTISE WHAT YOU PREACH"

THE dignitaries of the Church of England are right at least in this: that the time is getting short. The Church need not die; but she must die or change. And she must change soon. In ordinary times, those who make haste may be called on to do so slowly; but those who make haste slowly to-day are betraying—however unwillingly—the cause they would serve. It is no longer useful to call committees to consider the reports of other committees on the various movements for reform. The National Mission has come and gone, leaving hardly a ripple on the surface of the water—or, to be exact, five <sup>1</sup> ripples or committees, some of which have not reported yet (February 1918). It is true that we have all the time there is, but the world grows weary of our squabbles and asks why it should bear with us any longer.

<sup>1</sup> And a half. The half is a Committee on Women and the Church, but for research only—not to recommend action. Perhaps we ought to call it a quarter.

Yet the world is not weary of Christ—only of us: not weary of fellowship—only of Churches. If we could give them Christ and the fellowship they cry out for! What would such a Church or fellowship be like?

It would be, I think, like a great cathedral, with innumerable chapels, a Catholic Church containing many orders. The Churches exist not because they are wrong, but because they are right, for error has no immortality. It is the truth each has that keeps each one alive. Let us then seek reunion by a joyful bringing together of all our truths, in the certainty that the Church can never be truly orthodox till she is one. The order and beauty of Anglicanism, the freedom of Nonconformity, the silent worship of the Quaker, would all find a place in this Jerusalem. Does God expect us all to be alike when He has, with such surpassing tenderness and love, created us all so different? "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." Rome also and the East have their mighty treasure and wisdom and spiritual experience. Need any be shut out? Has any failed to produce saints? Or where saints are, can we say the Holy Spirit has been withheld and there is no Church?

No one who lived in the Spirit of Christ

should be shut out from this great Church of ours. (How startling that it even needs to be said !) Upon our lips and in our hearts would always be that last prayer of His for us and them—"that they may be made perfect in one." "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love . . . Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. . . . By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." How many of Christ's disciples by this test has the Church cast out !

Let her now claim all that is Christlike, all who are following Him. What is there in all this great discourse at the close of St. John's Gospel that even faintly suggests that such should be shut out because they do not believe in the Virgin Birth, Apostolical Succession, a "high" doctrine of the Sacraments, or (strange idol) the Empty Tomb ? "He that *doeth My commandments*, he it is that loveth Me." For this do you require a test—a baptism ? You have it : "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ?" "*We can, Lord.*" There are many who would falter over such a confession, who could glibly recite the creeds. But those who made it would not so easily forget that Christianity is not a creed but a life.



Our Church is called the Church of England. It is for her to take the first step. Awake at last to the urgency of the need, not only, let us believe, to her own danger but to the agony of a world going down into hell, the sickness of a divided and corrupted civilization, let us seek at last a better way. Our dissensions, born of our materialism, have brought us to this. Can the Church even at the eleventh hour find out a remedy?

Not by preaching, however eloquent. The world is unmoved by the eloquence of a Church which denounces materialism while herself as firm to hold, as fierce to defend, her property as any business firm: but by preaching *in act as well as word* the world is as ready to be converted to-day as at any time in its history. If (for example) instead of holding a National Mission to advocate fellowship and denounce materialism, our Church had considered the obstacles in the way of fellowship—and removed them? We Anglicans hold a privileged position in the State. If we were to offer to abandon or to share it, we should create a spirit of brotherly love between ourselves and the other Churches more likely to affect the life of this nation than thousands of eloquent sermons. If any religion should be “established” in this country (which I

do not hold) it should be Christianity, not Anglicanism. But in any case it takes from the reality of our talk about reunion, when we cling to a position of privilege among our brethren. It makes men scornful of our sermons on taking the lowest place.

With Disestablishment would doubtless come Disendowment. Is that too hard a test? And if it is, is it not rather futile for us to denounce the materialism of our civilization? At least we *act* as though we held our possessions above the unity we pray for! Yet Christ, in praying that His disciples should be at one, never even mentioned the desirability of their being rich also.

I do not here discuss whether these endowments are ours or not. I suppose, for the sake of argument, they are. But what then? Are they more precious to us than the cause of unity? Or are we unaware that our attitude towards the Welsh Disestablishment Bill was not one calculated either to promote brotherly love between the Churches or to convince any one that we held wealth lightly in comparison with it?

Such a suggestion excites at once in the minds of those to whom "the Church" means simply "the clergy," the conviction that it means only or chiefly the loss of

clerical incomes. It is cheap, say such, for an impertinent member of the laity to be generous at a cost which others have to pay.

But "the Church" is not the clergy, but all its members. If the Church loses all or any of her revenues, it is the whole body of the faithful who must make them good. If the laity desire a priesthood they will have to pay for it. They may indeed—I hope they will—allot the payment somewhat differently, but give they must. None of us will escape. Unless indeed the clergy have already convinced the laity that their services are superfluous—and surely the most despondent of clerics will hardly urge that this is the case? A Church without a priestly caste is, of course, imaginable: but we Anglicans have committed ourselves to another view, another system, and as long as we continue faithful to it, we must all, clergy and laity alike, be willing to pay for it.

Nor must the clergy, I think, continue to assure us that if we pay them they must inevitably say exactly what we like.<sup>1</sup> It is not impossible to give the priest some

<sup>1</sup> This has several times been said to me with great earnestness by priests whom I know to be much better than their description of themselves.

security in the tenure of his office short of having a freehold in it. And the “parson’s freehold” has not been an unmitigated blessing either to parson or parish.

The endowments given to our Church in the past are indeed, like all gifts, a trust. Many who oppose any attempt to take them from us do so, not because they are more materialistic than the rest of us, but because (they hold) these moneys or benefactions were given for a definite purpose, by people now dead, whose wishes in the matter must decide all honest men. This argument weighs very heavily with some, but it cannot be said to settle the matter. Bequests have again and again been diverted from their original purpose, either because that purpose is no longer possible or because circumstances have completely changed, or for some other sufficient or insufficient reason. This is true even of bequests or gifts made for a religious purpose. What has become of all the “chantreys where the sad and solemn priests” sang once for some one’s soul? Does any one, Anglican or Roman, propose to restore them their endowments for this purpose? Was not the Church of England guilty of far more glaring indifference to the wishes of pious donors at the time of the Reformation?

If to-day a more sensitive social conscience prevails, and we desire so far as is possible to respect the wishes of the dead, how are we to interpret them? Were endowments given to the Church of England as the national Church, or as a Church in communion with the Church of Rome? Were they to endow the teaching given then, or the teaching given now? If the answer to the first question is "To the national Church," what defence shall we offer for what we did in Ireland—or indeed in Wales? What claim have we to be called "the national Church" in either of these countries? If the answer to the second question is, "To the teaching given by the Reformed Church," how prophetic must those donors' minds have been! But the case is too gross: we did not *literally* respect any testator's wish while it was yet possible. Time has made such literal observance impossible. We could perhaps still ensure the devotion of their gifts to the service of religion, would we but act now. Time may soon take even that out of our power.

The question of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the English Church will sooner or later be raised. Can we not meet it at once, and meet it in a less schismatic spirit? Believe me, if we did we should



repeat the victory of Christ, and those who sought to spoil or cripple us (if any do) would find instead that we were united and purified. And we should find a world at last attentive to what we have to say on the great theme of brotherly love.

Religion conceived as an individual matter only may not be easy, but it is much easier than a religion that is social, and Christianity is a profoundly social religion. In this, it has a message of supreme importance to the world, which, for want of a social salvation, is going down quick into hell. But far from preaching our glad tidings, we rule out the social implications of our religion. War is a State matter : business is business : movements for reform are political. But we could show that it is possible for peace to reign between Churches—and why not nations ? That it is possible to run a business on Christian principles—and why not all businesses ? That politics must be made subject to Christ—and why not even politicians ?

If these things are not possible, if there cannot be a Christian State, or firm, or political leader, in God's name let us find it out and scrap our impracticable religion. But we cannot find it out until we try. Is that perhaps why we are shy of trying ? I am

certain it is why many who have tried and failed, drift away from the Churches. They are too honest to sit, every Sunday, through sermons on a life they know they cannot live through the week. I am sometimes tempted to wonder whether any one expects them to, or believes they can.

And yet men and women are hungering for an assurance that such things and such a world are possible. The way that is not Christ's has led to hell. Is it not just possible that the way that is His might lead to heaven? Not to an individual heaven for our individual souls, but to the establishment of the kingdom of heaven in earth—here—now—as Christ taught us to pray. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them." Do they? Not in this country surely!

I remember passing the end of a street one day, on which was a notice "To the parish Church." A parish church—not a mission church—a permanent building, probably (it was in the slums of East London) an old one. And such a street! So ugly, squalid, mean, and hateful. It looked like hell. Why had that church, served again and again, I do not doubt, by devoted priests, made

so little difference? Why was it still so like hell?

Surely because the Church has accepted these horrible conditions and preached resignation to each anxious or rebellious soul. But if it was a question of housing? or low wages? or glaring social injustices? “Oh, these things are political: the Church must not touch on these.” No wonder our politics have become a sink! But let her once more claim all the world for Christ and prove in her own body that there may be a Christian community as well as Christian individuals.

O Church of England, you could once lead us all: you once were our bulwark against oppression, the champion of our liberties, the educator of our people, the inventor of our democracy! The ferment of your teaching made revolutions, set free serfs, and clipped the power of kings. But all this was when you believed what you said and practised it. Many virtues you lacked, and the world lacks them still. You did not greatly love poverty or the blessing of a low estate, and what you said on these matters therefore went for naught. But you did believe that men were equal in the sight of God, and, acting on it, offered education to all, opened the priesthood to the poorest, set free the serf who became

your priest, and gave it to any priest to become Archbishop. What you believed and practised, you were able to teach the State.

But now you tell us we are equal, and are yourself a great respecter of persons. The provision made for the teaching of the poor you have seen diverted to the uses of the rich and have not protested, much less forbidden it. You have not been in the struggle for freedom of the poorer classes, or of women. We can never think that you were our friend. And so what you preach about our fundamental equality, our spiritual freedom, goes for nothing. We fight our own battle in the State without your help.

But it need not be so! What the Church has done once, she can do again. The way is clear—the need is great. Let us try out our Christianity, and the world will see and believe. Let us, in God's name, be a little reckless—a little faithful. What could be more staggering than the promises Christ made to us? Let us no longer swear that we believe them—absolutely believe them—but feel it would be imprudent for so great, so ancient, and so rich a Church to act on them. Let us with Peter claim miraculous powers. “Bid me come unto Thee upon the waters. And He said, Come. And

Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters, to come to Jesus. . . . And beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. *And they that were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.*”



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